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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 003182

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: MEDELLIN SCANDAL GENERATES POLITICAL FALLOUT

REF: BOGOTA 3077

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer
For reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary: The dismissal of Guillermo Valencia Cossio, former head of the Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) in Medellin, for criminal ties also led to the resignations of former Medellin Colombian National Police (CNP) Commander Marco Pedreros and Medellin "South American Games" organizer Gustavo Villegas. Villegas headed the paramilitary demobilization program under previous Medellin Mayor Sergio Fajardo. Opposition Liberal Party Chief Cesar Gaviria called for the resignation of Interior and Justice Minister Fabio Valencia Cossio, Guillermo's brother, and said the Liberals would refuse to engage the minister in Congress. Medellin Mayor Alonso Salazar praised Guillermo Valencia's firing, but said criminal penetration of local security institutions remains a problem. The scandal shows the strength of Colombia's institutions, but also tarnishes the Uribe administration and could damage Fajardo's presidential aspirations. End Summary

MEDELLIN FISCALIA SCANDAL DEEPENS

12. (U) The scandal surrounding the dismissal of former Medellin Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) director Guillermo Valencia Cossio for his alleged ties to former paramilitary and narcotrafficker Daniel Rendon ("Don Mario") has claimed additional victims. Former Medellin CNP Commander Marco Antonio Pedreros, also linked to members of Don Mario's organization, announced his resignation on August 26, while Gustavo Villegas stepped down as head of Medellin's "South American Games 2010" committee. Villegas, who headed Medellin's paramilitary demobilization program from 2004-07 before becoming Secretary of Government in former Mayor Sergio Fajardo's administration, admitted to hiring a local security firm headed by Don Mario associate Juan Felipe Sierra to protect demobilized para leaders.

CALLS FOR MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

13. (U) Opposition Liberal Party leaders called for Interior and Justice Minister Fabio Valencia Cossio (Guillermo's brother) to resign after Prosecutor General Mario Iguaran said he took a call from the minister protesting his brother's innocence. The Minister had previously acknowledged calling Iguaran, but claimed he only communicated his intention to recuse himself from the case. Liberal Party chief and former President Cesar Gavira charged that Fabio was responsible for corruption in the Medellin Fiscalia, and said the Liberals would not participate in congressional debates over the GOC's political and judicial reform packages. Minister Valencia Cossio is the GOC point man on those issues. President Uribe reiterated his confidence in the minister, but publicly urged Valencia to distance himself from his brother's case.

CONTINUED CONCERN OVER CORRUPTION IN MEDELLIN

14. (C) Medellin Mayor Alonso Salazar told us on August 22,

that he remains concerned over the Medellin security situation and corruption in the local political class. Salazar told us he believes that his rival in the October 2007 elections--Luis Perez--has joined forces with Antioquia Governor Luis Ramos, criminal elements, and traditional politicians in a campaign to discredit his administration. Salazar recently met with CNP Commander General Oscar Naranjo to discuss Medellin's security. Naranjo announced on August 26 that the CNP will send 400 additional police to the city.

¶5. (C) Marilu Mendez, head of the Fiscalía's criminal investigative unit (CTI), told us on August 26 that the investigation into the Medellin Fiscalía continues. She expects more arrests. Salazar praised the Fiscalía's decision to investigate and fire Guillermo Valencia, but said officials tied to the "Oficina de Envigado" criminal group--and other criminals--remain in the Fiscalía and local Police. (Note: The Oficina was run by Diego Murillo, otherwise known as Don Berna, before his extradition in May.) Salazar said criminal penetration of local security institutions has led the Mayor's office to conduct its own

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